

## **Germany, U.S. pen agreement to preserve some historic sites**

***By Matthew E. Berger***

WASHINGTON, May 19 (JTA) -- The United States and Germany have signed a pact to preserve sites of historical significance, including those relating to the Holocaust.

The joint declaration, signed Monday at the White House, also affirms both countries' commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of ethnic and religious groups in the country and to prevent discrimination.

Warren Miller, chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, said the agreement is ironic, given that the United States did little to prevent the Nazis from destroying the Jews and their communities in Europe.

"Even in death, most were not afforded a burial place -- they were burned, their bodies crushed, their ashes scattered," said Miller, who signed the declaration on behalf of the United States.

"Today, in the White House, the German and American governments are committing to preserve Jewish burial sites and sites associated with the murder of Jewish people."

Miller said Germany's interest in this issue predates this week's formal agreement. A year ago, the United States and Germany welcomed a memorial to the victims of the "Little Camp" at Buchenwald.

The commission is also working on other projects in Germany, such as a new museum at the site of the Mittelbau-Dora camp and preventing construction on other significant sites for the Jewish community in Germany.

At the signing here, Wolfgang Ischinger, Germany's ambassador to the United States, said he is proud to represent a generation of Germans that has "accepted the historical and moral responsibility" of preserving the legacy of the Holocaust.

"We want to commemorate the victims of genocide as well as those who gave their lives to stop the Nazi evil," Ischinger said. "At the same time, the sites serve and should serve as a reminder of the atrocities committed by the Nazi dictatorship, something we must never forget and we will never forget."

The commission has garnered similar bilateral agreements from numerous Eastern and Central European countries, such as Estonia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Slovenia, Ukraine, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.